

A SURVEY OF VANDALISM IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS
OF NORTHEAST KANSAS

by 265

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE PROBLEM	1
DEFINITION OF TERMS	1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	2
METHOD AND PROCEDURE	12
PERSONAL INTERVIEW RESULTS	14
SUMMARY	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY	27
APPENDIX	31
Letter of Request for Interview	32
Questionnaire	33

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Results Indicated from Interview Responses Relating to Financial Concerns of School Districts from Vandalism	15
II. Results Indicated from Interview Responses Relating to the Types of Vandalism and the Insurance Protection Against Vandalism . .	17
III. Results Indicated from Interview Responses Relating to the Protective Devices Used by the School Districts to Combat Vandalism	18
IV. Results Indicated from Interview Responses Relating to the Court Cases and Laws with Regard to Vandalism in School Districts . .	20
V. Results Indicated from Interview Responses Relating to the Persons Committing Most of the Acts of Vandalism in School Districts. .	21
VI. Results Indicated from Interview Responses Relating to the Trend of Vandalism in School Districts	22

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the losses of money that resulted from vandalism in the Kansas school districts, to compare the losses to the state level, and to suggest ways to help the districts reduce vandalism.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Vandalism. The ignorant or willful destruction or defacement of school property.

Parent-responsibility law. Laws enacted by the legislatures to make the parent responsible for the child's debt up to a set amount.

"AA" District. A member school district of the Kansas State High School Activities Association that has at least one high school of an enrollment of 650 students or more.

"A" District. A member school district of the Kansas State High School Activities Association that has at least one high school of an enrollment of 250 students to 649 students.

"3" District. A member school district of the Kansas State High School Activities Association that has at least one high school of an enrollment of not more than 249 students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"Vandalism is never a real problem until it hits your school,"¹ states K. F. Stoessner. It was stated by Edwin Waggener that, "One of the greatest difficulties in getting at the problem of vandalism is that we are dealing with an unknown quantity. Acts of deliberate destruction are usually done in secret."² The fact that a person is unoccupied and is looking for some kind of adventure may very well result in vandalism. William Bristow and Alex Lazes in an article written for Nation's Schools agree that "Young people need an outlet for their emotions, their feelings...perhaps even a sympathetic listener to their problems. They take their hurt out on inanimate objects when a human being won't listen to them."³ R. E. Rawlins believes, "Vandalism apparently offers some youngsters a means of 'getting even' with their teachers, their parents, and the adult world in general for real or imagined injustices."⁴

William Bristow and Alex Lazes feel that vandalism can be classified into three types:

The first, the child does damage accidentally; the second, the child commits damage but under some spontaneous provocation and usually is not really cognizant of what has happened; the third, the chronic vandal, is a disturbed child or youth who requires the treatment and handling consistent with his condition.⁵

¹K. F. Stoessner, "How One District Licked Vandalism," School Management, April, 1965, 23.

²Edwin Waggener, "Remedies for Vandalism," Nation's Schools, September, 1940, 53.

³William H. Bristow and Alex H. Lazes, "Vandalism is Minimized by a Continuous Program of Constructive Citizenship," Nation's Schools, April, 1954, 43.

⁴R. E. Rawlins, "Solution to a Million Dollar Glass Problem," The American School Board Journal, December, 1964, 40.

⁵William H. Bristow and Alex H. Lazes, op. cit., 46.

Most of the literature reveals that vandalism to school property results from the second type...an urge for the moment, a spontaneous dare.

T. Probst in an article written for Nation's Schools reports:

Headlines tell of a 15 year-old in Philadelphia who set fire to a school because he was angry with a teacher who disciplined him. In Denver a gang specialized in breaking into schools to rip telephones off walls, then emptied the coin boxes.⁶

In an article written for Newsweek it was reported that:

Over one week-end sixteen rooms in Corlears Junior High School (P.S. 12) on Manhattan's Lower East Side were thoroughly wrecked. Furniture was overturned, filing cabinets were smashed and rifled, medical-dispensary equipment reduced to rubble, books ripped out of covers, walls and corridors sprayed with fire extinguishers, and obscenities were scrawled on the blackboards. The principals office was left a shambles. Seven teen-age boys were picked up and confessed the destruction. Their motive was to make the papers. They had read about vandalism in other New York schools and thought it was time that good old P.S. 12 'got a little publicity'. Four days before this the Inwood Junior High School (P.S. 52) on the Upper West Side got a similar going over with something added: The vandals plugged a top-floor sink, opened the taps, and flooded the school.⁷

Parents, often, are not the right people to set a good example for their children because of the food they waste, lack of regard for other people's property, driving too fast, and drinking too much. Edwin Waggener in an article in Nation's Schools said: "Undoubtedly, the most important single reason for destruction activities among pupils is loose parental control. Harmony within many homes has never been observed by the children. Respect for authority is often almost unknown."⁸

⁶T. Probst, "How to Cut Down Vandalism," Nation's Schools, September, 1961, 64.

⁷"Vandals, New York City," Newsweek, March 22, 1954, 22.

⁸Edwin Waggener, "Remedies for Vandalism," Nation's Schools, September, 1949, 58.

Danny Kaye, who grew up in the Murders, Inc., section of Brooklyn, said, "...parents plant the seed of juvenile delinquency more than anyone else."⁹ Waggener also says:

Sociologists have found that certain types of areas, particularly in crowded cities, are breeding places for delinquency of all kinds. Therefore, it appears that poor community environment is one of the basic causes of antisocial conduct.¹⁰

In some cases where both parents are working and even at times when only one parent works, they feel the school assumes full control and responsibility of the child while not at home. Waggener believes, "Children that are left to roam the streets will, in most cases, drift to bad associates. The minds of such associates are fertile enough to think up most undesirable forms of behavior, of which vandalism is one."¹¹

R. Wyss in his study, "Vandalism in Children," the only case study in reference to vandalism found in the Psychological Abstracts since 1953, states "Vandalic acts are directed largely against anonymous persons and entail a longer lasting agreeable feeling of satisfaction than do planned and directed acts of aggression against a specified authority."¹²

"Drop-out rates are also strongly related to the damage rank of the school,"¹³ states Nathan Goldman in the Education Digest. Where students feel the schools do not meet their needs, the damage to the school increases.

⁹"Vandals, New York City," Newsweek, March 22, 1954, 22.

¹⁰Waggener, loc. cit.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²R. Wyss, Vandalism in Children (Psychological Abstracts, Vol. XXIX, No. 5365), The American Psychological Association, Inc., August, 1955, 559.

¹³Nathan Goldman, "School Vandalism," The Education Digest, December, 1960, 1.

It was indicated that dissatisfaction arose when students felt the curriculum did not meet their needs or when they felt that the school administration was not sufficiently concerned with student welfare. Teachers and parents in high-damage schools also seem to have lower identification with the school.¹⁴

The literature indicated that it is the minority of the people that cause most of the serious vandalism to school property. A small per cent can wreck public property so that the larger per cent will not be able to use the property. The small per cent of vandals get the headlines of the newspapers and magazines, while the large per cent of outstanding young people carry the load of responsibilities. "Too often teenagers are blamed for work of adults, trying to make a robbery look like vandalism," states T. Probst in an article in the Nation's Schools.¹⁵

Betty Dauw explains, "Vandalism is expensive--expensive to prevent and expensive to repair."¹⁶ "It is easy to measure the cost of vandalism," states Robert Moses, "and it is still easier to exaggerate the number, spirit, and support of those responsible."¹⁷

In a study conducted by the Boston Public School Committee, and reported by Betty Dauw, it was found that "school districts all over the country with pupil enrollment over 10,000 consider window breakage the major problem."¹⁸ In 1963, vandalism in the Boston public schools totaled \$160,000; of this

¹⁴Ibid., 2.

¹⁵Probst, loc. cit.

¹⁶Betty Dauw, "The High Cost of Vandalism," Safety Education, March, 1965, 3.

¹⁷Robert Moses, "Vandals at Work," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, October, 1960, 28.

¹⁸Dauw, loc. cit.

\$100,000 alone was used for the replacement of window glass. "The annual cost of vandalism in that city exceeds \$1.70 per pupil enrolled."¹⁹

In 1947 it was reported by William Bachrach that in Chicago forty glazers were employed full time to replace broken glass in the schools, but they were never able to complete their work. From 1936 to 1946 Chicago records show that:

Vandalism in the public schools of Chicago cost the citizens of this city over two million dollars in the ten years. The business manager estimated that this sum would have purchased five elementary school buildings. In other words, vandalism was depriving Chicago the opportunity of acquiring a new building each second year.²⁰

In Topeka, Kansas, a grade school was vandalized by having obscenities written on classroom walls, teachers' desks ripped open, and eighteen inside windows shattered. Principal Cormack said, "There wasn't much actual material damage, but it was an awful mess."²¹

In a study made in New Jersey by Edward Fandt of Rutgers University, it was found that nearly half of the \$1,454,249.00 spent on vandalism over a five year period from 1955-60 was attributed to fires which resulted from vandalism.

This same study revealed that in terms of the ratio of reported losses to estimated valuations of school property, damage was:

(1) highest for densely-populated counties, (2) lowest for agricultural or combined agricultural-residential-resort communities, (3) lowest for rural school districts, (4) lowest for communities with less than 5000

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰William Bachrach, "Vandalism a Big Business in Public Schools," The American School Board Journal, September, 1940, 33.

²¹"Vandals Wreck Topeka School," The Topeka Daily Capital, October 9, 1967, 1.

population, (5) highest for school districts with enrollment of over 5000 pupils--if major fire losses resulting from vandalism were excluded.²²

According to the study made by the Boston Public School Committee, vandalism damage usually occurs when schools are not in session and between the months of April and November in the early morning hours. "A marked increase occurs before the opening of school in September."²³

The following remarks were made by an administrator from Wisconsin, "We attempt to give serious attention more to preventing vandalism than to getting excited after it occurs. 'You are heading for the reform school!' gets us nowhere."²⁴

In the opinion of Betty Daw, "The first step in selecting a security system is to decide what is to be protected--The entire building, the principal's office, selected classrooms, the corridors or perhaps only a few objects in a room."²⁵

In an article in The American School Board Journal it was revealed that "there are three main types of security systems used in schools: perimeter; interior; area."²⁶

²²Edward Lloyd Frandt, "A Study of the Practices of New Jersey Board of Education in Protecting School Property Against Losses Due to Vandalism and Malicious Mischief," Dissertation Abstracts, 22:3055, 1961.

²³Daw, loc. cit.

²⁴"Opinion Poll--Vandalism: A Dirty Word for Eight of Ten Schoolmen," Nation's Schools, April, 1968, 67.

²⁵Daw, op. cit., 5.

²⁶"Detection Alarms That Thwart Theft, Vandalism," The American School Board Journal, December, 1964, 33.

Of these the most commonly used would be the perimeter system which stops the intruder before he gets inside. Common perimeter devices are: fences, padlocks, door locks, and floodlights.

The interior system signals the moment anyone gets inside the building, or if a person has stayed behind after everyone else has left. An example of the interior system would be an electric eye system, an alarm system and the stationing of a dog inside the building.

The area system guards a specific part of the school or its equipment. A common area device would be a television camera.

No matter what is used it can only summon help, not capture the intruders. "One of the greatest benefits of a security system is psychological. Any intruder knowing a school is protected by an electronic security system will certainly avoid that school."²⁷

In the past ten years much has been said and done about parent responsibility laws. By 1965 thirty-one states had enacted a form of the parental responsibility law, and more were in the process of doing so. Kansas first passed the parent responsibility law in 1959 with money recovery set at \$300, but it was ammended in 1965 to raise the recovery value to \$1,000. The possibility of having to pay for acts of vandalism or being faced with a court case will, in most instances, cause the parent to make a greater effort to keep his child out of trouble. J. G. Fox and A. H. Lazes explain in an article for The Clearing House, "What parents can do to improve home training so that

²⁷Ibid.

children will have more respect for public and private property is most important."²⁸

In an opinion poll conducted by Nation's Schools, 99 per cent of the administrators felt that the parents should be held responsible for the child's acts of vandalism to the school, but on the other side Alice B. Freer, program analyst in Health, Education and Welfare's Division of Delinquency Service says: "Liability laws may actually contribute to delinquency."²⁹ The liability law can lead to added strain in already tense families and can give delinquents a weapon against their parents which they do not hesitate to use. The parent liability law is no guarantee of recovering losses. Delinquent children from low income families make recovery, in most cases, limited or impossible and even if parents are wealthy most states have a maximum recovery amount set by the law.³⁰

Dr. M. A. McGhcey, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of School Boards and Executive Secretary of National Organization for Legal Problems in Education, was interviewed concerning the status of the parent-responsibility law in Kansas and the rest of the United States. No case of vandalism involving the parent-responsibility law has ever been taken to a court of record in Kansas so no legal precedent has been set. In all states where such cases have been taken to court by the school board, the court has usually ruled that a parent can be held responsible only for the necessities

²⁸J. G. Fox and A. H. Lazes, "Children, Spare That Window," The Clearing House, January, 1955, 209.

²⁹"Parent Liability Laws Aren't Very Helpful," Nation's Schools, April, 1968, 61.

³⁰Ibid.

of minors, such as the cost of food, shelter, and clothing (perhaps medical attention in emergencies) and not for the cost of vandalism. The parent-responsibility law, therefore, has been found unenforceible in most cases in which it was used.³¹

In the Boston Committee Study reported by Betty Dauw, "Mechanical preventive devices can do an effective job of curtailing vandalism, but perhaps the ultimate solution to the problem lies in education."³² Boston found that after one year of turning their attention toward the educational aspects of their anti-vandalism program, the vandalism cost substantially decreased.

Most students want a say in the government of the school they attend. The students want to take part in the activities dealing with the school, and so they must be well informed as to the program set up by the school authorities. This idea is further advanced by the statement made by Fox and Lazes as they said, "Developing pride in the school through a variety of extra-curricular activities has also produced desirable results."³³

In the Chicago public schools that were once a part of the ghetto area, a program is now under way that attempts to improve the image of the school with parents, students and the neighborhood involved. "The premise: If children are proud of their school, they won't vandalize it."³⁴

³¹Dr. M. A. McGhehey, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of School Boards and Executive Secretary of NOLPE, in a personal interview, December, 1967. Permission to quote secured.

³²Dauw, op. cit., 7.

³³Fox and Lazes, op. cit., 293.

³⁴"How Schools Combat Vandalism," Nation's Schools, April, 1968, 59.

In order for vandalism to be minimized, Fox and Lazes feel: "The problem of dealing with vandalism requires the co-operation of the school, community agencies, and the churches as well as the home. Alone, no one agency or group can solve this problem."³⁵

Nathan Goldman feels school vandalism is of major concern because of its menace to the social order:

Vandalism represents a simultaneous threat to two important values in our society--education and property. An attack on these two highly valued institutions by the child may be a forerunner for more serious attacks on society when he reaches the adult stage.³⁶

³⁵Fox and Lazes, op. cit., 290.

³⁶Goldman, op. cit., 4.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

In Kansas, an area north of Interstate Highway 70 and east of U. S. Highway 31, a vandalism survey was made by taking a random sample of the unified school districts. A total of thirty-three districts were found to qualify from this area and eleven of the thirty-three were chosen at random to participate in the survey. The number and name of each district was found by using a copy of the 1967-68 Kansas Educational Directory and a copy of a Kansas road map. Each district's number was then placed in a container and drawn from this container by the author's six-year-old daughter.

The eleven districts used for the interviews were divided according to the classification as set by the Kansas High School Activities Association: The first two were "AA" districts, the next three were "A" districts and the last six were "B" districts.

A letter of request for interview was sent to superintendents of four different districts so that a time for the personal interview might be arranged. One of the four superintendents returned the enclosed card saying he would be able to be interviewed at the suggested time. The other three superintendents stated they would be busy and would not be able to grant a personal interview at the suggested time. Another course of action was then taken, this was to call each superintendent and set up a time that would be convenient for him to grant the personal interview.

A vandalism questionnaire with 19 questions was the instrument used for the personal interview. The instrument contained questions referring to court cases, insurance, types of vandalism covered by the insurance, total budget and total amount spent on vandalism, special account in budget for vandalism, most

common type of vandalism, protective devices used by the school district, who commits the vandalism, and the parent-responsibility law. The instrument may be found in the appendix on page 33 of this report.

Each administrator interviewed was found to be very cooperative.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW RESULTS

Most of the persons interviewed about vandalism felt that vandals are committing a more malicious type of destruction now than was the case in the past. Vandals look first for money that might be in the building, but if they find very little or none, they become rebellious and destroy materials and equipment found around them.

Table I, page 15 revealed that the eleven districts surveyed had a total budget of over \$16,500,000.00 and the vandalism cost to these districts was just under \$19,000.00. This \$19,000.00 represented only .12 per cent of the total budgets of the districts included in the sample. The cost of vandalism seemed very small, but this was money budgeted to educate the students, not to repair damage to building and equipment. The school districts represented in the sample spent just under \$19,000.00 on vandalism. The total budgeted for school districts in Kansas in 1966-'67, was \$257,797,262.00. A projected comparison of .12 per cent to all the school districts of Kansas would indicate that \$309,356.71 would have been spent on vandalism for 1966-'67.

No district listed vandalism as a separate account in the budget. Money was taken from another account to pay for the repair of damage caused by vandalism. In all but one case, the money came from the Maintenance of Building Fund to defray the cost of vandalism. The one district used another general fund account to cover the vandalic cost.

Table I, page 15, also indicated that very little of the money spent on vandalism was recovered. Two districts recovered 100 per cent while seven districts recovered less than five per cent. The total money recovered by all eleven districts was nine per cent.

TABLE I

RESULTS INDICATED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES RELATING
TO FINANCIAL CONCERNS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS FROM VANDALISM

District Responding	Total Budget for 1966-'67	Total money spent on vandalism	Is vandalism under special account in budget	If not, what account	Total per cent of losses recovered from vandalism
1***	\$10,928,953	\$16,642	No	Maintenance	5
2***	\$ 1,100,000	\$ 283	No	Maintenance	35
3**	\$ 525,929	\$ 138	No	Maintenance	0
4**	\$ 1,228,000	\$ 110	No	Maintenance	0
5**	\$ 586,000	\$ 297	No	Maintenance	100
6*	\$ 386,000	\$ 100	No	Maintenance	0
7*	\$ 716,000	\$ 425	No	Maintenance	100
8*	\$ 209,000	\$ 245	No	General Fund	5
9*	\$ 264,000	\$ 250	No	Maintenance	0
10*	\$ 341,733	\$ 176	No	Maintenance	0
11*	\$ 291,000	\$ 293	No	Maintenance	85
TOTALS	\$16,596,515	\$16,959	11-No	1-Gen. Fund 10-Mainten.	Ave. 9

*** "AA" District as set by the Kansas State High School Activity Association

** "A" District as set by the Kansas State High School Activity Association

* "B" District as set by the Kansas State High School Activity Association

Table II, page 17, shows that glass breakage was listed by the majority of those persons interviewed as one of the two most common types of vandalism to the school district. In all but two of the nine cases it was listed first. Spray painting of buildings and sidewalks was listed next. Obscene writing on walls, handles taken from fixtures, flagpole ropes cut, and the throwing of beer bottles and cans on the sidewalks and grounds were some of the other types of vandalism listed by the administrators. Most administrators felt that other than the cost of the glass breakage, the nuisance of having the custodians taken away from their regular job to clean up the vandalism, was the main disadvantage.

In Table II, page 17, it was, also, shown that about one half of the persons interviewed felt it was unwise to carry vandalism insurance because the insurance does not cover glass breakage, and glass breakage was considered by over half of the districts to be the most expensive type of vandalism.

Money spent on vandalism, in most cases, was found to be very hard to recover. Table III, page 13, revealed that most administrators were trying to use enough protective devices to keep vandalism cost to a minimum. Flood-lights, outside and inside, were the most common protective device used by the school districts, and the administrators felt even more lights would insure better security. The majority of administrators also used "rounds" by the police to help combat vandalism. Patrons of the school districts were informed that the students or the parents, in most cases, would be held responsible for any vandalism damage done to the schools. The one protective measure most administrators felt they would like to use, but have not as yet, was janitors working at night in different parts of the building.

TABLE II

RESULTS INDICATED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES RELATING
TO THE TYPES OF VANDALISM AND THE INSURANCE PROTECTION AGAINST VANDALISM

Districts Responding	Most Common Type of Vandalism	Second Most Common Type of Vandalism	Does the school district carry vandalism insurance	What insurance regulations have to be met by the school district	Types of van- dalism covered by insurance
1***	Glass breakage	Spray painting	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
2***	Glass breakage	Cutting flag-pole ropes	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
3**	Glass breakage	Breaking and entering	Yes	None	Meditated
4**	Glass breakage	Spray painting	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
5**	Glass breakage	Broken beer bottles	Yes	None	Accidental Meditated
6*	Spray painting	Broken beer bottles	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
7*	Spray painting	Furniture damage	Yes	None	Accidental Meditated
8*	Glass breakage	Obscene writing	No	Not applicable	Not applicable
9*	Glass breakage	Broken fixtures	Pages only	None	Accidental
10*	Spinning tires on school grounds	Glass breakage	Yes	None	Accidental Meditated
11*	Driving on lawns	Glass breakage	Yes	None	Accidental Meditated

*** "AA" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

** "A" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

* "B" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

TABLE III

RESULTS INDICATED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES RELATING TO
THE PROTECTIVE DEVICES USED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO
COMBAT VANDALISM

Districts Responding	Alarm	Flood- lights	Janitors Working At Night	Screens on Windows	Rounds by the Police	School Night- Watchman	Television Cameras	Fences with Locks	Vandalic Regulation of the School Board
1***	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Prosecute to recover money
2***	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	None
3**	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Parents held responsible
4**	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	None
5**	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	None
6*	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	None
7*	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	None
8*	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	None
9*	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	None
10*	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Parents held responsible
11*	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Students held responsible
	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Students held responsible

*** "A" Districts as set by the KHSAA

** "A" Districts as set by the KHSAA

* "E" Districts as set by the KHSAA

Table IV, on page 20, indicated the results found relating to the court cases and the parent-responsibility law with regard to vandalism. The parent-responsibility law was not used by the two districts that had gone to court in order to recover damages to the district as a result of vandalism. One district had just completed the only case that had ever been tried in that district to recover money from vandalism. In the other, an "AA" district, the superintendent stated there had been many cases tried in the district, mostly ones of minor nature. The parent-responsibility law would be used by most of the administrators if the occasion were to arise. Administrators seemed to feel that if every year it was to cost more to prevent vandalism than it did to pay the cost of repairing the damage after vandalism occurred, prevention was a waste of time and money. If an immediate savings of time and money is the goal, districts may as well forget about preventing vandalism. Much planning and a longer range goal is needed to reduce the cost of vandalism.

In Table V, on page 21, over half of the persons interviewed stated vandalism to the schools was the action of the students from that district. Half of the students that committed the vandalism were of junior high school age. A few administrators reported that vandalism was committed by persons not in school, but living in that district.

Table VI, on page 22, indicated that most of the persons interviewed said that they thought there was little or no noticeable change in the amount of vandalism over the last ten years. The reasons listed were good community-school relations, pride, tradition, environment of the students, and general discipline. Keeping the public informed relative to policies and events at the different attendance centers, stated most administrators, encouraged the people to help protect the schools from vandalism.

TABLE IV

RESULTS INDICATED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES RELATING
TO THE COURT CASES AND LAWS WITH REGARD TO VANDALISM IN
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Districts Responding	Has there ever been a vandalism court case involving your district	Are you aware of and would you use Bill 28-120 if vandalism occurred in your district
1***	Yes	Yes
2***	No	No
3**	No	Yes
4**	No	Did not know of
5**	No	Yes
6*	No	Did not know of; After explanation - yes
7*	No	Yes
8*	Yes	Yes
9*	No	Did not know of; After explanation - yes
10*	No	Yes
11*	No	Yes

*** "AA" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

** "A" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

* "B" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

TABLE V

RESULTS INDICATED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES
RELATING TO THE PERSONS COMMITTING MOST OF THE ACTS OF
VANDALISM IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Districts Responding	Students of the district	Students of neighboring districts	Persons not in school but liv- ing in district	Persons not in school living in neighboring districts
1***	Yes	No	No	No
2***	Yes	No	No	No
3**	Yes	No	No	No
4**	Yes	No	No	No
5**	No	No	Yes	No
6*	Yes	No	No	No
7*	No	Yes	No	No
8*	Yes	No	No	No
9*	No	No	Yes	No
10*	Yes	No	No	No
11*	No	No	Yes	No
Totals	7-Yes 4-No	1-Yes 10-No	3-Yes 8-No	0-Yes 11-No

*** "AA" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

** "A" Districts as set by the KCHSAA

* "B" Districts as set by the KSHSAA

TABLE VI

RESULTS INDICATED FROM INTERVIEW RESPONSES RELATING
TO THE TREND OF VANDALISM IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Districts Responding	Has the trend of vandalism in the past 10 years been:			Why is vandalism more, less, or no change	If there is more vandalism, what effort is the district making to control it
	More	Less	No Change		
1***	Yes	No	No	More malicious	Greater effort to appeal to the student
2***	No	No	Yes	Police protection	Not applicable
3**	No	No	Yes	Environment and personality	Not applicable
4**	No	No	Yes	Pride and responsibility	Not applicable
5**	No	No	Yes	Tradition	Not applicable
6*	Yes	No	No	Negligent parents	Discussion group with students
7*	No	No	Yes	General discipline	Not applicable
8*	No	No	Yes	General discipline	Not applicable
9*	No	No	Yes	Police protection	Not applicable
10*	No	Yes	No	Good community- school relations	Not applicable
11*	Yes	No	No	Persons waiting for Army life	Nothing

*** "AA" Districts as set by the KSHCAA

** "A" Districts as set by the KSHCAA

* "B" Districts as set by the KSHCAA

Negligent parents and an unrest in the world causing young men to loaf around a community while waiting to be drafted, were reasons given (see Table VI, on page 22) by a small number of administrators as to why vandalism was a problem in their community.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the losses of money that resulted from vandalism in the Kansas school districts, to compare the losses to the state level, and to suggest ways to help the districts reduce vandalism.

Vandalism control in most states has become an increasingly difficult problem. Although actual losses from vandalism amounted to less than one per cent of the school districts' general operating budget, school administrators were concerned with the safety factors involved and the increasing financial strain on already over-burdened budgets.

Although very few school districts have kept detailed records of the exact costs that resulted from vandalism, it was found from the survey, that just under \$19,000.00 was spent on vandalism in the 1966-'67 school year by eleven Kansas school districts that had a combined total budget of just over \$16,500,000.00. The total state budget for schools for this same period was listed at \$257,797,262.00. Projected at this rate, to the total state school budget, shows that the state's districts should have paid just under \$310,000.00 for vandalism.

Most security systems (perimeter--the most commonly used system--interior, and area), used by the school districts, will not completely control the vandalism of a district's schools.

Floodlights was one of the security systems discussed quite often in the literature and used by the school districts from which interviews were taken. Most administrators felt they should make even greater use of floodlights around the school and interior lighting within the buildings.

Glass breakage due to vandalism, was found to be the major item of expense to the school districts. Suggestions were made in the literature and witnessed on trips made to interview the persons of the school districts, that in order to reduce glass breakage, the district would need to reduce the number of windows easily accessible to persons looking for trouble or with excess time on their hands. Two ideas were discussed in the literature for reducing glass breakage. First, when building new schools, windows on the outside of the building should be designed so they would be above the head level of an average height person walking by the building. It was hoped that windows not easily reached would not be broken. The second idea would be to design the school with all windows facing an interior court yard. This idea was observed in one of the districts where an interview was conducted and was reported to be very satisfactory. The sun and beauty of the outdoors was still used, but the windows were not accessible to persons on the exterior of the building.

It was found in the literature and substantiated by the survey that the district that had the most vandalism costs was the district where the student population was the greatest. It was also found, that most of the vandalism to the schools of a district was the work of students living in the district and of junior high school age.

Dr. M. A. McGhehey, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of School Boards and Executive Secretary of NOLPE, in a personal interview concerning the status of the parent-responsibility law in the United States, stated no case of vandalism regarding the parent-responsibility law has ever been taken to a court of record in Kansas so no legal precedent has been set. The courts in other cases in the United States have usually ruled that a

parent can be held responsible only for the necessities of a minor (perhaps medical attention in emergencies) and not for the cost of vandalism.

Only one reference was found in the Psychological Abstracts since 1953 concerning the psychological causes of vandalism, and this reference seemed limited in scope since only two case studies were examined. The author, therefore, feels more time, energy, and money should be concentrated in the area of psychological study to find the basic causes of vandalism.

It was found, in the survey and throughout the literature, that security devices will help control vandalism, but it was not accepted as a total solution to the problem.

It was also found that projection of the cost of vandalism to the state, probably cost the tax payers of Kansas about \$310,000.00 in 1966-67.

The results of this study seem to justify the following recommendations:

- (1) Within limits of reasonable expenditures, school districts should make use of the security services including lights (inside and outside), "rounds" by the police, and the scheduling of custodial work during the night hours.
- (2) New schools, when constructed, should have the windows placed above head level if they are put on the outside of the building, or the windows should be built on the interior looking out onto a center courtyard.
- (3) Curricular concern should be given to helping the young people to accept their moral obligations and to develop values which should reduce vandalism.
- (4) More thorough investigations should be made of the psychological and other causes of vandalism so that money now spent on vandalism can be used where it was first intended, to educate the young.

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APPENDIX

LETTER OF REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

Riley, Kansas
March 25, 1968

Mr. Merle R. Bolton, Supt.
U.S.D. #501
415 West 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Sir:

Everyone is interested in the adult of tomorrow. As a fellow educator we are also interested in the students of today for they will be the adult leaders of tomorrow.

As an educator you are aware of the needs for meeting the individual differences of the students of our schools. I would like to ask you some important questions relating to your district with regard to vandalism in your community.

The study will attempt to obtain and evaluate information that will be useful to all administrators and boards of education in these areas:

1. Extent of losses to school property by vandalism and malicious mischief.
2. Development of suggestions relative to the protection of school property from vandalism and malicious mischief.

Will you cooperate in this study by granting a personal interview on Saturday, April 6th at 8:30 a.m. at your office. Please indicate on the enclosed card and return.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

James E. Koflen

VANDALISM QUESTIONNAIRE

Reporting School _____

Date _____

1. As far as you know has there ever been a court case involving your district with regard to vandalism? Yes _____ No _____
2. Does your school district carry vandalism insurance? Yes _____ No _____
3. Does the insurance company have any certain regulations, that refer to vandalism, that must be met by the school district? Yes _____ No _____
4. What types of vandalism does the insurance cover? Accidental _____ Meditated _____
5. If there are regulations, may a copy be obtained? _____
6. In order to figure per cent, would you state your total budget for 1966-67? \$ _____
7. The total amount spent on vandalism: Insurance \$ _____
Glass Breakage \$ _____
Classroom furniture \$ _____
Other \$ _____
Total \$ _____
8. Is vandalism listed under a special account in your budget? Yes _____ No _____
9. If not a special account, under what account is vandalism listed? _____
10. Is the trend toward more or less vandalism in your school district or is there no noticeable change over the past 10 years? More _____
Less _____
No Change _____
11. What is the basis of the answer to the preceding question? _____

12. If the trend is toward more vandalism what is your school district doing in an effort to control the problem?
13. If the school board has regulations relating to vandalism, may a copy be obtained? Yes _____ No _____
14. What type of vandalism do you list as most common to your school district? Most Common: _____
15. What would you rank as the second most common type of vandalism? Second: _____
16. What per cent of the total losses from vandalism does your school district recover? _____ %
17. Which of the following protective devices does your school use to combat vandalism?
- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Alarm | _____ |
| Floodlights | _____ |
| Janitors | _____ |
| working at night | _____ |
| Screen on windows | _____ |
| Rounds by police | _____ |
| School night-watchman | _____ |
| Television cameras | _____ |
| Fences with locks | _____ |
| Other: | _____ |
18. Who commits the most acts of vandalism in your school district?
- | | |
|---|-------|
| Students of your school district | _____ |
| Students of neighboring districts | _____ |
| Persons not in school living in your district | _____ |
| Persons not in school living in neighboring districts | _____ |
19. Do you, as a school representative, know of and would you use Bill 33-120, parent-responsibility law, if vandalism occurred in your district? Yes _____ No _____

A SURVEY OF VANDALISM IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS
OF NORTHEAST KANSAS

by

JAMES E. KOFTAN

B. S., Friend's University, 1960

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1968

The study on vandalism was conceived to determine the amount of money being spent on vandalism by the school districts of Kansas and to suggest ways to protect the school property from these vandalic activities.

A personal interview with the superintendents of a random sampling of the school districts of Northeast Kansas was taken to discover how much money each year was being spent on vandalism. Each superintendent was called by telephone to request and schedule a personal interview.

School administration is concerned with vandalism to the districts and consider it a problem that is increasing, even though now less than one per cent of the total school budgeted funds was found to be spent on vandalism. Vandalism costs were found to be highest in more densely populated areas and were lowest in the rural or agricultural areas.

Glass breakage was found to be the number one cost and problem relating to vandalism.

Three different types of vandals were identified: (1) those that cause accidental breakage, (2) those that vandalize because of an urge for the moment or from a spontaneous dare; this is the most common type of vandalism to the school districts, (3) those that are chronic vandals.

It was also found that it is a very small per cent of persons that cause the actual damage to districts' property. Of this very small per cent about one-half of the people that vandalize the schools are of junior high school age.

Three types of security devices were found to be used for the protection of schools: the perimeter--the type used the most by school districts, the interior, and the area.

Recommendations relating to reducing the amount and cost of vandalism were:

(1) The use of security systems can be put to better use by having a good lighting system for the exterior and interior of the buildings, "rounds" by the police, and by having a staff of custodians working at night, a limited number working on week-ends, and holidays to give a busy atmosphere so that vandals will by pass the building.

(2) In building a new plant, windows should either be placed above head high on the exterior of the building or built on the interior looking out onto a center courtyard.

(3) The community, school and parents must cooperate in a program to educate the young minds that public property and moral obligations are a duty and privilege given to every American. Vandalism can be reduced through education of the young.

(4) In order that money spent on vandalism may be spent where it was first intended, to educate the young, more time and energy should be spent on a more thorough investigation of the underlying causes of vandalism.